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Tourism, pilgrimage, and religious fervor are important but can wait, says IMA

3RD WAVE "IMMINENT"

IMA WARNED THAT INDIA HAD ONLY RECENTLY WALKED OUT OF THE DISASTROUS SECOND WAVE AND IF COVID PROTOCOLS VIOLATED, PEOPLE WITHOUT VACCINATION TO GO SCOT-FREE IN THE MASS GATHERINGS ARE POTENTIAL SUPER SPREADERS FOR THE COVID THIRD WAVE.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's top doctors' body, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) today appealed to the Central and state governments to not let the guard down on the Covid front warning that a third wave was just around the corner. It expressed pain over complacency shown by authorities and the public in various parts of India at this crucial juncture. The consequences of treating a Covid patient and its impact on the economy will be much better than the economic loss suffered by avoiding mass gatherings, it said. Going by the experience of the past year-and-a-half, the impact of the third wave can be mitigated by ensuring universal vaccination and following Covid-appropriate behaviour, according to IMA. The third wave of the coronavirus pandemic might have set in on July 4, according to a Hyderabad-based researcher who has analysed daily data on new infections and deaths over the last 15 months.



With the global evidence available and the history of any pandemics, the third wave is inevitable and imminent...However, it is painful to note...in many parts of the country both the government and public are complacent and engaged in mass gatherings without following Covid protocols. At this crucial juncture, in the next two-to-three months...let us not take any chances."

COVID TRIGGERED BIGGEST INCREASE IN HUNGER: UN

Paris: The Covid pandemic caused an estimated 18 percent increase in the number of people facing hunger, a UN report released on Monday found, dealing a massive setback to efforts to ensure everyone has access to food. The world was already off track to achieve its goal of eradicating hunger by 2030, but the report warned that Covid had now sent it back in the wrong direction. The "economic downturns as a consequence of Covid-19 containment measures all over the world have contributed to one of the largest increases in world hunger in decades," said the annual food security and nutrition report compiled by several UN agencies. Although the full impact of the pandemic cannot yet be determined, the report estimated around 118 million more people faced hunger in 2020 than in 2019, an increase of 18 percent. The rise in moderate or severe food insecurity was equal to the previous five years combined.

INDIA REPORTS TWICE AS MANY COVID INFECTIONS AS IN ALL OF LAST YEAR

India has already reported more than twice as many Covid-19 cases in 2021 as it had all of last year, a USA TODAY analysis of Johns Hopkins University data shows. India passed the mark early Sunday. Of the 30.8 million cases India has reported, two-thirds have come in less than 6 and 1/2 months of 2021, the report said. India's COVID deaths, widely believed to be drastically undercounted, have added up to 259,302 this year, compared with 148,738 in 2020, the report added.



Centre deploys NDRF as flashfloods hit Himachal



Shimla | Agencies

The Central government on Monday deployed the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) as heavy rain in Himachal Pradesh led to flashfloods in upper Dharamsala in Kangra district, washing away parked cars and partially damaging houses. 10 locals were reported missing and one has died at the time of going for print. Dharamsala, nearly 250 km from the state capital Shimla, recorded precipitation of 184 mm, the highest ever during this monsoon. The damage to property was reported in villages located in the vicinity of McLeodganj,

the political, cultural and spiritual hub of the Tibetan diaspora. More than 10 cars, most of them belonging to tourists, were washed away in Bhagsunag. Elsewhere in Kangra, three houses and five shops located along a seasonal rivulet in the Gaggal area were damaged by gushing water. The damage to property was largely due to encroachments on rivulets, officials told reporter. The weather bureau has forecast heavy rain at isolated places in the state till Wednesday. The southwest monsoon arrived in Himachal Pradesh on June 13 in its earliest onset in the past 21 years. Its normal arrival in the state is June 26.

With largest seed ball sentence, Telangana women set Guinness record

Hyderabad: Women self-help groups of Telangana's Mahabubnagar district on Monday entered Guinness World Records making largest seed ball sentence with 2.08 crore seeds balls rolled in 10 days. At an event held at Mahabubnagar, the women arranged the seeds balls to make the sentence - "Two crore seed balls made and planted by SHG women transform Mahabubnagar into Hetero Green Belt". Women from Palamuru Zilla Mahila Samakhya (PZMS) or the federation of women self-help group of Mahabubnagar district and the Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEMPA) set the record under the leadership of Telangana minister V. Srinivas Goud and senior officials. The seed balls were planted with the help of drones at the KCR Urban Eco Park spread over 2,097 acres.

VHP opposes Yogi's population control policy

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) affiliate, on Monday registered its strong opposition to the draft proposal on population control recently released by the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission that excludes people with more than two children from availing benefits under government schemes. The VHP, in its letter to the state law commission, has not just cited policy's adverse impact on children, it also lists imbalance in communities as 'different communities respond differently to incentives or disincentives related to



family planning and contraception'. The organisation suggested the deletion of Sections 5, 6 (2) and 7 to avoid contraction of population and also undesirable social and economic consequences of a one-child policy. VHP's international working president Alok Kumar, who himself is an advocate, advised Uttar Pradesh to avoid getting into a situation where only one community takes the benefit of the policy whereas the other keeps expanding. It is also concerned about the Hindu population contracting whereas other communities are expanding. He also believes that this policy will disrupt the balance between the working and dependent population ratio.

"Laws Won't Help": Bihar CM

States can do whatever they want. But I clearly believe that it is not possible to ensure population control with a law. Look at China or any other example. When women are aware and educated, that is how the population growth rate will reduce.



More than 80 killed by lightning in UP, Raj and MP

New Delhi: At least 67 people were killed by lightning across Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh as many states received scattered rainfall on Sunday. The majority of deaths in Uttar Pradesh were reported in Prayagraj district with 14 fatalities. 41 people died due to lightning strikes across 16 districts and 30 were injured. Apart from that, 250 animals were killed and 20 injured in Uttar Pradesh. While Prayagraj reported 14 deaths, five deaths each were reported in Kanpur and Fatehpur districts. In Kaushambi, four people died due to lightning strike while

Firozabad, Unnao and Rae Bareilly reported two deaths each. Hardoi and Jhansi also reported one death each. Lightning strikes claimed at least 20 lives in different parts of Rajasthan on Sunday. Among the deceased, seven were children from Kota and Dholpur districts. Eleven people were killed and many feared injured in a lightning strike in front of the 12th Century Amer Palace near Jaipur. In Madhya Pradesh, lives of around twenty people were lost due to lightning in different districts in two days (Sunday & Monday).

RBI COMES UP WITH SCHEME FOR RETAIL INVESTMENT INTO GOVT SECURITIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday issued the 'RBI Retail Direct' scheme to facilitate investment into government securities by individual investors. The scheme, to help retail investors or individuals open and maintain the 'Retail Direct Gilt Account' (RDG Account) with the central bank, will be commenced in a later date, said an RBI statement. RDG Account can be opened through an online portal provided for the purpose of the scheme. The portal will also give the registered users facilities to access to primary issuance of Government securities and access to NDS-OM. As part of continuing efforts to increase retail participation in government securities, 'the RBI Retail Direct' facility was announced in February for improving ease of access by retail investors through online access to the government securities market -- both primary and secondary -- along with the facility to open their gilt securities account with the RBI. Government securities or bonds, commonly known as G-Secs are debt instruments issued by the Reserve Bank of India, on behalf of the Centre or state governments.



Killer Prices: High inflation dents savings, threatens recovery

Prices of petrol, diesel, edible oils, and a whole lot of other essentials have sky-rocketed in the recent past due to high domestic taxation and global factors such as rising demand from China. This has led to a sharper than expected inflation rate that has stubbornly stood at over 6 per cent in June and May.

The latest data from the Reserve Bank of India indicates that there has been a sequential decline in household savings as a percentage of GDP in Q3FY21 from the highs of Q1 or Q2.

The RBI has projected India's retail inflation for the current financial year at 5.1 per cent. It has a set a range of 2-6 per cent for retail price based inflation.

On Monday, the latest data showed that June retail inflation eased up on a sequential basis but still managed to remain above the 6 per cent threshold.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) slipped to 6.26 per cent last month from 6.30 per cent in May.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

High rate of retail inflation has not only dented household savings, but is now threatening the viability of a sustainable economic recovery post-lockdown 2.0. Besides, denting the economy, the trend impacts the pent-up demand and cancels out the positive impact of low interest rates which are brought down to boost the economy. In terms of households, the 6 per cent plus inflation rate has dented the household savings rate which was already eroded due to wage cuts and job losses.

The preliminary estimate of household financial savings is placed at 8.2 per cent of GDP in Q3 2020-21. The moderation



tion was driven by a significant weakening in the flow of household financial assets,

which more than offset the moderation in the flow of household financial liabilities.

The moderation of household savings is also a direct result of falling bank interest rates, even with inflation remaining high. This actually means that an individual savings in bank is not yielding any positive value but is only covering for inflation meaning you are actually dissaving by putting money in banks. Similarly, economic activity has been largely hampered due to the fact that Reserve Bank's ability to loosen the monetary policy further gets curtailed in the face of such high inflation numbers. In India without low interest rates, purchases of automobiles, houses and other items get delayed or put-off, and this trend unleashes a negative multiplier effect on the industry.



SC SEEKS CENTRE, AG'S RESPONSE ON PLEA CHALLENGING SEDITION LAW

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday sought response from the Centre and the Attorney General on a plea challenging the constitutionality of the offence of sedition under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. A bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Ajay Rastogi was hearing a writ petition filed by two journalists, one each from Manipur and Chhattisgarh. It had issued notice to the Attorney General on the petition on April 30. During the hearing on Monday, AG K.K. Venugopal and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, urged the top court to grant two weeks to file their responses. The bench granted them the time and adjourned the matter for further hearing on July 27.

The main writ petition, filed through advocate Tanima Kishore and drawn by advocate Siddharth Seem on behalf of the petitioner journalists Kishorechandra Wangkhemcha and Kanhaiya Lal Shukla, argues the impugned section clearly infringes the fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India which guarantees that "all citizens shall have the

right to freedom of speech and expression". "The restriction imposed by the section is an unreasonable one, and therefore does not constitute a permissible restriction in terms of Article 19(2) of the Constitution. Hence this petition is filed to humbly pray that Section 124-A be declared unconstitutional and void by this Hon'ble Court and be struck out of the Indian Penal Code," said the plea. The petitioners said the vagueness of Section 124-A exerts an unacceptable chilling effect on the democratic freedoms of individuals, who can't enjoy



their legitimate democratic rights and freedom, against the backdrop of fear of life imprisonment.

Citing the top court decision upholding the validity of the law in

1962 in the case of Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar, the plea argued that the court may have been correct in its finding nearly sixty years ago, but the law, which is obsolete in contempo-

rary scenario, no longer passes constitutional muster today.

"As outspoken and responsible journalists, they (petitioners) have been raising questions against their respective state governments as well as the Central government. They have been charged with sedition under Section 124A of IPC in various FIRs for comments and cartoons shared by them on the social networking website Facebook," added the plea. The plea contended that the top court in Kedar Nath's case did not go far enough in reading down the section. 'Retaining 'intention' and 'tendency' as basis for

criminal liability means that these inherently subjective terms can be used (and abused) to penalise those who have not caused any violence or public disorder," it submitted.

MEHUL CHOKSI GRANTED BAIL ON MEDICAL GROUNDS

New Delhi: In a relief to fugitive Indian businessman Mehul Choksi, who is wanted in India in the Rs 13,500 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case, the Dominica High Court on Monday granted him bail on medical grounds. Choksi's lawyer Vijay Agarwal told reporter: "Yes, Choksi has been granted bail on medical grounds. Dominica's courts finally upheld the rule of law and rights of a human to be treated in the medical facilities of his choice. And all attempts by various agencies did not bear fruits. There is a solace in saying that all clever foxes end up as fur coats," he said.

Choksi had gone missing on May 23 from Antigua and Barbuda, sparking a massive manhunt. He was later captured in Dominica and is facing charges of entering the country illegally. Choksi had filed a case in the high court of Dominica, seeking to quash the proceedings against him alleging that his arrest was "dictated" by representatives of the Indian government.

Won't Contest J&K Polls Until Both Constitutions Applied: Mehbooba Mufti



Team Absolute | Srinagar

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti said on Monday that she will not contest elections until both the constitutions of India and the former state are made applicable to Jammu and Kashmir. "Personally, it (abrogation of article 370 and 35-A) is very emotional for me. I contested the first election taking oath under the constitutions of India and state. I took both flags in my hands. Until both constitutions will not be (existing) together (in J-K), I have

said I will not personally contest elections," the former chief minister told reporters.

Replying to a question on contesting elections and becoming a chief minister, she said the PDP has several capable people and not just Mehbooba Mufti alone.

Ms Mufti also criticised the Jammu and Kashmir administration over its decision to sack sons of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin from government services, saying "you can't hold a child responsible for the actions of his father until and unless you have proof".

Woman confined, gang-raped for 9 days in Haryana

Gurugram | Agencies

A woman was allegedly confined in Ballabgarh (Faridabad) for nine days and raped by four men. The culprits are yet to be nabbed, the police said on Monday.

The rapists let the woman go after nine days of confinement, following which she informed her family members about the incident.

The victim approached the police on July 10 and filed an FIR.

The victim stated in her police complaint that a man called Chintu of her village asked her to meet him on June 30 near a temple located in her village.

When the woman reached there Chintu was present, thereafter another man Sanju reached there in his car and the duo took her to Faridabad.

"During this I asked for water from them. They offered me water laced with some intoxicating substance. After consuming this I fell unconscious and when I came back to my senses I found myself confined in a room," the victim told the police.

In the night two men named Kuldeep and Deepak came into the



room. Later all the accused raped her in turn at gunpoint and also injected and gave her suspicious pills for nine days, she said.

They even recorded an objectionable video and threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed the matter to anyone. The accused also forced her to make fake calls to her house that she is well, she told the police.

During the confinement, the four men raped her every day and dropped her at Ballabgarh bus stand on July 8, from where she called her family members. She went to the police station on Sunday.

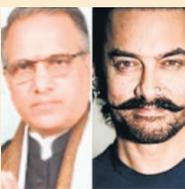
A case of rape was filed with Sohna Sadar police station.

BJP MP SUDHIR GUPTA TAKES A DIG AT AAMIR KHAN

New Delhi:

Sudhir Gupta, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Madhya Pradesh's Mandsaur, has said that at the age of becoming a grandfather, Aamir Khan is looking for a third wife. The politician, known for making bizarre comments, spoke to reporters on Sunday on the occasion of World Population Day. "Aamir Khan left his first wife Reena Dutta with two children, Kiran Rao with one child and now, at the age of becoming grandfather, he is looking for a third wife," CNN-News 18 quoted the BJP leader as saying.

"Those who claim that people like Khan have no brains for job other than selling eggs" were correct," he added. Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao, who have a son Azad, recently announced their separation. The two, in a video had asked everyone to pray for them and that both of them would happily co-parent their son.



RATH YATRA 2021:

LORD JAGANNATH REACHES GUNDICHA



Team Absolute | Bhubaneswar

The chariots of Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra reached Gundicha temple before the scheduled time on Monday.

All rituals, starting from Pahandi Bije of the three deities, to pulling of chariots, of the annual Rath Yatra

were completed much before the scheduled time and in a very spiritual atmosphere.

In view of Covid-19 pandemic, the festival was conducted without any participation of devotees. Only 'Sevayats' (servitors) pulled all three holy chariots.

Adorned with 'tahias' (giant floral crowns), chants of "Jay Jagannath",

the three deities along with Lord Sudarsan were brought out of the sanctum sanctorum in the Dhadi Pahandi procession to their chariots parked before Srimandir.

Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati accompanied by his disciples and servitors offered prayers to the deities on their respective chariots.

PARLIAMENT'S MONSOON SESSION FROM JULY 19 ON USUAL 11 A.M. TIME

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After running the previous two sessions with different time slots for both houses due to Covid-19 pandemic, Parliament will return to its usual functioning from 11 a.m. during its Monsoon Session taking place between July 19 to August 13. Seating arrangements for the Members of Parliament have also been made in the same chamber, unlike during the previous two sessions when a group of MPs were sitting in Lok Sabha and the others in Rajya Sabha.

In the previous two sessions, the Rajya Sabha functioned between 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the Lok Sabha from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. and the parliamentarians used to sit in both the chambers to avoid



the spread of Covid-19 virus.

Noting that this will be the sixth session of the 17th Lok Sabha, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday said that the Monsoon Session will take place from July 19 to August 13 with 19 days of business. The timings of the session will be from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

for both the Houses, he added.

With the coronavirus pandemic still raging, the session will be held in both the Houses of Parliament with all necessary protocols and arrangements are being made to accommodate members on a social distancing basis.

SEVEN PRISONERS ESCAPE ARUNACHAL JAIL BY THROWING CHILLI POWDER

Itanagar: Seven undertrial inmates fled from East Siang district jail in Arunachal Pradesh by spraying chilli, salt and pepper powders on the jail guards, police said on Monday. A police official said that a massive search operation has been launched to nab the escaped prisoners immediately after the undertrial jailbirds escaped from the jail located in district headquarters in Pasighat on Sunday night. Five jail guards were injured in the attack. Around 100 prisoners are lodged in the district jail in East Siang district in eastern Arunachal Pradesh which shares borders with Assam. The seven fleeing prisoners have been identified as Abhijit Gogoi, Taro Hamam, Kalom Apang, Talum Panying, Subhash Mandal, Raja Tayeng and Dani Gamlin.

FIR against man for provocative speech at Pataudi mahapanchayat

Gurugram | Agencies

The Gurugram police have filed an FIR against a teenager for allegedly making provocative comments at a mahapanchayat held in Pataudi on July 4, police said on Monday.

This teenager had allegedly opened fire at a group of anti-CAA protesters in Jamia in Delhi last year also.

The FIR has been registered based on a complaint submitted by a resident of Jamalpur village in Gurugram under Sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence) and 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting



its religion or religious beliefs) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Pataudi police station on Sunday," said a senior police officer. In his speech at the mahapanchayat, the teenager allegedly called for attacks on the Muslim community.

The teenager had also encour-

aged the crowd to abduct Muslim women and "warned" those with a "terrorist mindset" that if he can "go to Jamia in support of CAA", "Pataudi is not very far for him".

A purported video of the speech was shared widely on the social media.

TROLLED FOR WRONG PREDICTION, MET DEPT CLARIFIES ON MONSOON

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After being trolled for faulty predictions about the monsoon arriving in Delhi, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a clarification here on Monday on the advancement of southwest monsoon. The Met Department said Southwest Monsoon continued its advance over the country till June 13 in association with favourable atmospheric circulation and a low pressure system over Bay of Bengal after the onset of monsoon over Kerala on 3rd June. Such kind of failure by numerical models in prediction of monsoon advance over Delhi is rare and uncommon, IMD said.

By June 13, it covered most parts of the country except northwest India. On June 13, numerical weather pre-

"The delay in monsoon advance was mainly due to (i) no formation of low pressure area over Bay of Bengal, (ii) No presence of monsoon trough at mean sea level near Delhi, (iii) 5-6 Western disturbances moved west to east across North India which dominated over the monsoon easterlies,"

dition (NWP) models suggested the favourable conditions with moist lower level easterly winds reaching to northwest India which may help further advance of monsoon into most parts Madhya Pradesh; remaining parts of Uttar Pradesh; Delhi; Haryana



Moisture laden easterly winds have led to increase in cloudiness and relative humidity. It also led to revival of monsoon over the region and occurrence of fairly widespread rainfall activity over east Rajasthan, HP, Uttarakhand, J&K and scattered rainfall over Punjab and west Rajasthan. However, it did not cause significant rainfall activity over Delhi even though, there was rainfall activity over neighbouring places around Delhi.

and Punjab during subsequent 48 hours. Accordingly, a press release was issued indicating likely advance of monsoon into Delhi by June 15.

On June 14, however, weather analysis based on satellite and NWP model consensus indicated approach of a trough in mid-latitude westerly winds, leading to weakening of easterly winds over northwest India. Due to adverse influence of this mid-latitude westerly winds, further advance of monsoon into remaining parts of

northwest India including Delhi was not expected. Accordingly, IMD issued an updated press release indicating that further advance of southwest Monsoon into remaining parts of northwest India including Delhi would be slow and delayed. However, this development of interaction with westerlies could not be anticipated by the weather prediction models.

Since June 20, there has been no further advance of monsoon due to weak/break monsoon conditions.



MP ON RED ALERT AFTER TERROR MODULE BUSTED IN UP

Two terrorists of the Al-Qaeda-supported Ansar Ghazwatul Hind were arrested by the Uttar Pradesh ATS from the outskirts of Lucknow on Sunday

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has sounded an alert in the wake of the arrest of two terrorists of an Al-Qaeda-supported outfit on the outskirts of Lucknow in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, MP Home Minister Narottam Mishra said on Monday.

A watch persons suspected or identified as linked to the SIMI (Students' Islamic Movement of India) or Al-Qaeda.

"We have sounded a red alert in view of the arrest of two terrorists in Uttar Pradesh and the terror situation in Jammu and Kashmir. I have directed MP's Director General of Police (DGP) to immediately issue an order on this," the minister said.

Two terrorists of the Al-Qaeda-supported Ansar Ghazwatul Hind were arrested by the Uttar Pradesh ATS from the outskirts of Lucknow on Sunday, senior official earlier said, adding that they were planning explosions, including using "human bombs", at several places in UP. A huge amount of explosive was also seized from their houses, the offi-

cial had said. They were planning to "unleash terror activities before August 15 (Independence Day) in different cities of UP", including Lucknow, the official had said.

Mishra has responded to the development taking place in Uttar Pradesh. He said a red alert will be an issue in the state of Madhya Pradesh. He has also directed the DGP, Madhya Pradesh HM is making the basis of terrorist activity that took place in Lucknow and Jammu & Kashmir. There was no big terroristic activity that happened in Madhya Pradesh.

Notably, on 31 October 2016 there were an encounter 8 Simi activists who were trying to break the Jail in Bhopal. Apart from this, no such incident has happened in the state.

CM meets Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia

- Expresses thanks for starting eight new flights in the state
- Demands to include other tourist places under UDAN scheme

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan met Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia at his office at Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday and congratulated him on becoming a Union Minister. Chouhan thanked Scindia for starting 8 new flights Gwalior-Mumbai-Gwalior, Gwalior-Pune-Gwalior, Jabalpur-Surat-Jabalpur, Ahmedabad-Gwalior-Ahmedabad. Chouhan said that with the start of these flights from July 16, the development of the state would get a new impetus. People will get employment, as well as tourism and business will get a boost.

Chief Minister submitted a proposal to the Union minister to make Bhopal airport an international airport and demanded that Bhopal airport be developed as a hub. Apart from this, he also demanded permis-



sion to build a new airport in Gwalior. Chouhan urged for expansion of Indore, Bhopal and Jabalpur airports, to increase the frequency of international flights in Indore and to start international air service from Indore to Singapore and Gulf countries.

Chouhan also demanded promotion of new flights and air connectivity in Rewa, Khajuraho, Datia, Gwalior, Bhopal, Jabalpur under the UDAN scheme of the Central Government.

Scindia assured all possible assistance by the Centre on the proposals made by Chief Minister Chouhan.

CM CALLS ON UNION DEFENSE MINISTER IN NEW DELHI

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan requested Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh to set up a Defense Cluster in Jabalpur during his visit to New Delhi at his residence here today. Chouhan said that setting up of a defense cluster will not only increase and generate employment opportunities but also new investment opportunities will be available. With this, the country and the state will get new dimensions towards becoming self-reliant. Chouhan informed that the defense products manufactured in four Ordnance Factories already existing in Jabalpur and one Ordnance Factory in Itarsi will also increase production more than before. There is MSME sector present in Mahakaushal area and direct and indirect employment opportunities will increase in the sector and other technical institutions. Rajnath Singh assured all possible assistance by the Center in this regard.



Madhya Pradesh to get the cheapest solar power ever

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The reverse bidding for two units of Agar's 550 MW Solar Power Plant started today by the New and Renewable Energy Department with a base tariff of Rs 2.73 per unit. Twelve companies of national and international level participated in the bid offer. BEEMPOW Energy Private Limited and Avaada Energy Private Limited Developers were selected for both the units on the basis of the lowest offer, respectively. A minimum offer of Rs 2.444/unit and Rs 2.459/unit was received from BEEMPOW Energy Pvt. Ltd and Avaada Energy Pvt. Ltd. respectively. This will be the cheapest solar power ever for Madhya Pradesh. It may be noted that the Rewa Solar Project, one of the world's largest solar projects, had received the least solar tariff of Rs 2.97. The project is in production at full capacity since January 3, 2020. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had dedicated it to the nation exactly a year ago on July 10, 2020. The entire process was completed in the presence of Chairman, Madhya Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission Shri SPS Parihar, Principal Secretary



New and Renewable Energy Sanjay Dubey and Managing Director Energy Development Corporation and CEO Rams Deepak Saxena and Secretary Shailendra Saxena. Two units of 550 MW will be set up in Agar on one thousand hectares of land at a cost of about Rs. 1950 crores by private investment. The target of generating electricity from the project has been set in March

2023. The project will provide employment to about 5500 persons at the time of inception and to around 500 persons once it begins operation.

The department had invited tender from Solar Project Developers on January 26, 2020. Three international companies, 9 national and 3 public sector companies participated on June 21, 2021 as the last date of ten-

der for Agar Solar Park after obtaining various approvals and permissions as prescribed. Of these, 12 companies were selected on the basis of minimum tariff - Tata Power, Renew Power, BEEMPOW Energy, NTPC, Ayana Renewable Power, Torrent Power, SJVN Ltd., Azure Power, Al Jomaih Energy, Acme Solar, Spring Green and Avaada Energy who took part in reverse auction.

Deepak Saxena informed that 15 developers participated in the bidding process in Shajapur Solar Park in this series. Its reverse auction is to be held on July 19. Apart from this, proposals will be received for Neemuch Solar Park by July 15.

RUMS (Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited) was incorporated in July-2015 as a joint venture company of Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam Limited and Solar Energy Corporation of India. Rewa Solar Project established by RUMS has created new records in the field of solar energy at the national level. In this series, Agar 550 MW, Shajapur 450 MW and Neemuch 500 MW solar projects totaling 1500 MW are being developed by RUMS in the state.

Give building permission within 30 days: Singh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Objections/suggestions should be received from the general public within 15 days by publishing the proposed Madhya Pradesh Municipality (Colony Development) Rules-2021. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh gave these instructions during the discussion on departmental rules. Singh said that it should be ensured that the building permission is given within 30 days. He said that applications should not remain pending for more than the stipulated time anywhere. Commissioner Urban Administration and Development Nikunj Srivastava informed that the server is also being updated for this.

Singh said that the SOP of the works being carried out in the urban bodies should be revised. He said that this would help in getting quality work done. Singh said that ensure proper utilization of the allocated amount under the Urban Livelihood mission. Undertake continuous monitoring of the scheme by setting parameters for training. Get bank linkage done by giving training to self-help groups. This scheme has now been implemented in all 406 urban bodies. Singh



said that action should be taken against the contractors who do not do the work of drinking water and sewerage on time. According to the new amendment, camps can be organized for the settlement of cases related to compounding. Singh said that notices should be issued to the concerned building owners. The extent of exemption in compounding fee should also be fixed. Singh gave instructions for maintenance of roads and cleaning of drains. He said that people should be convinced for Covid friendly behaviour. Coupon system should be implemented in shops where there are more crowds. Talk to traders too. Make people wear masks. During this, Principal Secretary Urban Development and Housing Manish Singh and other officers were present.

Cops nab accused in murder of late Union minister's wife

Team Absolute | Tikamgarh

The Madhya Pradesh Police on Monday arrested an accused wanted in connection with the murder of the wife of former Union minister P Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, an official said. The police also recovered some of the robbed ornaments and other items worth Rs 33 lakh from the accused, he said.

arrested from the house of his in-law in Baldevpura village of Tikamgarh on Monday," Jata police station in-charge Trivendra Trivedi said.

The police also recovered 522 gm of gold jewellery, 300 gm of silver ornaments, besides diamond jewellery and other goods, estimated to be worth Rs 33 lakh, from the accused, he said.

After the arrest, the accused was handed over to the Delhi Police, the official said. Kitty Kumaramangalam, a lawyer, had been living alone in Delhi since the demise of her husband a few years ago.

P Rangarajan Kumaramangalam served as a Union minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government between 1998 and 2001. His son is also active in politics.

Take precautions to prevent corona infection: Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Tribal Affairs and Scheduled Castes Welfare Minister Meena Singh has said that awareness should be taken to prevent corona infection in Anupurna district. She instructed the officials of the Health Department to ensure that proper preparations are made from now on in view of the possibility of third wave. Meena Singh said that the number of fully equipped beds in the district should be increased. Along with this, the number of corona tests should also be increased. Meena Singh was presiding over the meeting of the District Planning Committee. Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Bisahulal Singh and Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav were



also present in the meeting. Apart from these, regional MP Himadri Singh was also present in the meeting.

Meena Singh directed the Chief Medical and Health Officer in the meeting to expand the facilities available with us to deal with Corona. Minister Singh directed that the health workers working in the field and Anganwadi workers suffering from cold, cough and cough should immediately inform the health offi-

cial, so that their corona test can be done as per the requirement. Minister Singh directed that vaccination centers should be set up as per the requirement and the doses of vaccination should be increased. Singh said that people should be involved in crisis committees in urban and rural areas. He instructed the Superintendent of Police that necessary steps should be taken to make people wear masks.

In the meeting, Singh said that it should be made mandatory for the people coming to the government fair price shops to get food grains. He strictly instructed the officials of the Electricity Board that there should not be any unannounced power cut anywhere. He said that the transformers should be repaired immediately after burning. Singh gave instructions to complete the incomplete houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. No poor person should be deprived of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Singh directed the CEO, Zilla Panchayat that the Zilla Panchayat should get electricity connection in school and Anganwadi buildings. She told the need for construction of toilets in school buildings and Anganwadi Center buildings.

Private schools suspend online classes, seek resumption of physical classes

- There are around 45,000 private schools affiliated to the Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) and 2,800 affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in the state.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

More than 47,000 private schools in the state suspended online classes indefinitely on Monday (July 12) to press for their various demands, including waiving off their recognition fee in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and resumption of physical sessions for Classes 9 to 12. There are around 45,000 private schools affiliated to the Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) and 2,800 affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in the state. "We suspended online classes indefinitely from today after failing to get a positive response from the state government," said Ajeet Singh, president of the MP Private School Association, an umbrella body of about 45,000 schools affiliated to the MPBSE. He said their major demands were that authorities stop inspecting the already closed schools and renew the recognition certificates of these institutions for five years, instead of one. "Looking at the losses that we have incurred, the state government should not charge the annual school recognition fee during these testing times," he said.

Chouhan reviews corona infection

Corona situation under control but vigilance necessary: CM

Maximum 100 people can participate in the marriage program: Markets could open till 10 pm

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the situation of corona infection in the state is under control. There are only 18 confirmed cases and only 296 active cases. There is no case of corona in 44 districts of the state. Only one or two cases are left in 8 districts. In view of this situation, the state government has decided to give relaxation in some more activities. Now a maximum of 100 people will be able to attend the wedding and 50 people will be able to attend the funeral. Cinema houses can be operated with 50 percent capacity. Restaurants will now be able to operate at 100% capacity and markets will remain open till 10 pm.



Chouhan was addressing the review meeting of Corona in Mantralaya. All the ministers of the Covid-19 core group, ministers and officers in-charge of the districts attended the meeting virtually.

Chouhan said that vigilance is necessary regarding corona infection. Cases are increasing in southern and north-eastern states. Cases are not decreasing in Kerala and Maharashtra. Cases are expected to increase in August. We

are committed to neutralize the third wave in the state. The ministers and officers in-charge of the districts should maintain vigilance and activism. Public should be continuously motivated to follow Covid friendly behaviour.

Information about genome sequencing issued in the state for vigilance on corona infection was also given in the meeting. Chouhan has said that special watch should be kept on Bhopal and Indore for corona infection. There is traffic in these cities from other states and there is enough traffic from Bhopal Indore to other districts of the state as well. It was informed in the meeting that out of 18 confirmed cases, 8 Bhopal, 3 Indore, 2 Jabalpur and 1 each from Neemuch, Rajgarh, Sagar Shivpuri, Singrauli are included. Apart from this, there is no case of corona left in all the remaining 44 districts. More than 72 thousand tests are being done daily to keep an eye on corona infection in the state. On Sunday, 6476 tests were conducted in Bhopal, 9693 in Indore, 5726 in Jabalpur, 2455 in Gwalior, 1436 in Sagar, 1321 in Shivpuri, 1436 in Rajgarh, 905 in Singrauli and 805 in Neemuch. Chouhan said that 100% vaccination should be ensured by September. In the state, 37 percent of the population above 18 years of age has

been vaccinated. Chouhan said that the districts having less than 75% progress in vaccination will be reviewed separately. Chouhan said that the minister-in-charge should keep an eye on the necessary preparations to face the third wave. There was no interference in the construction of the oxygen plant. It was informed that out of the total 176 oxygen plants being set up in the state, 25 have started, 16 have been delivered. The operation of all the plants will start by September 15. Chouhan has said that the equipment made available to the health institutions at the time of Covid should be properly maintained. It should be ensured that they are used properly. A system of proper audit of equipment should be established. It was told in the meeting that now there is no shortage of medicine for Mucor mycosis in the state. Only 490 active cases are left. Of these, there are 214 cases in Indore, 144 in Bhopal, 63 in Jabalpur, 23 in Ujjain, 21 in Rewa, 15 in Gwalior. A total of 1698 persons have been discharged.



MAHA CONG CHIEF BACKTRACKS AFTER ACCUSING CM, DY CM OF 'WATCHING' HIM

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Hours after levelling serious allegations that Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar were keeping tabs on him, state Congress President Nana Patole suddenly backtracked, claiming he was "misinterpreted" by the media and opposition Bharatiya Janata Party.

Addressing a party meeting in Lonavala, Patole had said that every morning, the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister get a report on his schedules, meetings, agitations, discussions, and other things, etc from the Home Department.

While the Sena-NCP rejected his allegations outright, BJP leaders said that Patole's comments prove that the Congress is "isolated and insulted" in the Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

Patole said that ever since the Congress started talking of self-reliance and fighting future polls independently, the ground has shifted from under the feet of the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party. "What's wrong if I talk of building and strengthening the party?" he asked. "The system is not allowing me to live peacefully. My phone is being tapped. Wherever I go, whatever I speak, a report is sent to the CM, Deputy CM and state Home Minister. Some people are unhappy that the Congress is growing in strength," said



Patole. Even as his statements created a flutter in state political circles, especially the MVA allies Sena-NCP, the BJP hit out, saying there "is deep sense of mistrust among the 3 ruling allies", Patole rescinded his utterances. On Monday evening, Patole blamed sections of the media and the BJP for misinterpreting his words as he was referring to the Intelligence Bureau (IB). "False news is being circulated by the Opposition about me. The MVA government is stable and will continue its full term," Patole declared.

In the past couple of months, Patole's calls to go alone in the upcoming civic bodies' elections after six months and future Assembly and Parliament polls, have irked the Sena and the NCP. Sena's Kishore Tiwari, who has MoS status, flayed the Opposition for attempting to divide the MVA partners on this issue and reiterated that the Thackeray-regime has done "an excellent work" in 18 months, so the BJP will not succeed in dislodging it for the next 25 years.

NCP national Spokesperson and Minister Nawab Malik responded by pointing out that what Patole referred was routine government procedures of which he was perhaps unaware, and advised him to consult ex-CMs of his own party.

"The State Intelligence Department (SID) keeps details on movements of VIPs, senior political leaders of all parties, union leaders and other prominent persons for security reasons. It anyone doesn't want security they can inform in writing and the Home Department will look into it," Malik asserted. Hoping to exploit the situation, BJP Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnis said Patole's statement is an indicator of "the extent of distrust among the MVA partners".

His counterpart in the Council, Pravin Darekar, said there is "some unrest among the Sena-NCP after Congress said it will contest futures polls independently."

Covid vaccination resumes in Mumbai

According to civic officials, the drive had been suspended at all 300 authorised centres owing to shortages of doses from Friday onwards, though vaccination is not carried out on Sundays.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

After three days' halt, Covid-19 vaccination resumed in full swing with crowds thronging different government and private inoculation centres here on Monday.

According to civic officials, the drive had been suspended at all 300 authorised centres owing to shortages of doses from Friday onwards, though vaccination is not carried out on Sundays.

However, with fresh stocks received from the government, the campaign started again on Monday with long queues witnessed at many centres since 5 am today, hours before the opening time of 9 a.m.

Owing to limited stocks made available, most centres are giving between 50-100 doses only, prioritising those needing their second



due jabs, with 50 per cent walk-ins and the rest through prior appointments.

The BMC received a little over 1,25,000 doses on Saturday comprising Covishield and Covaxin for the immunization drive in which pregnant women are being permitted the jabs at their nearest vaccination centre.

Till now, the BMC has inoculated around six million people in the city, including 12.35 lakhs who have got their second doses, too.

DRI seizes 100 kg Gold Potassium Cyanide worth Rs 32 cr

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized a consignment of 100 kg of Gold Potassium Cyanide (GPC) worth Rs 32 crore at the Air Cargo Complex here. The consignment was being exported to Dubai by a Mumbai based firm.



firm at Mumbai. GPC is also known as Potassium Dicyanoaurate and its primary application is in the electrolytic gold plating of metals. The GPC, attempted to be exported, was falsely declared to be the resultant product made from the duty-free import of gold that the Mumbai based firm was permitted to bring in as an input against an Advance Authorisation (AA) license. "The Advance Authorisation Scheme is duty exemption Scheme, available under Chapter 4 of the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-2020, where a manufacturer exporter or merchant exporter tied to supporting manufacturer can bring

in duty free import of goods as inputs which are to be physically incorporated in export product," mentions a DRI statement. The Mumbai based exporter never manufactured any export products out of the duty-free inputs that it was permitted to import, said the statement, adding "Instead, it diverted the imported duty-free gold to the domestic market at a profit, by melting and recasting it." This effectively, leads to the violation of the 'actual user condition' imposed under the Advance Authorisation Scheme. "To fulfill its export obligations under the Advance Authorisation Scheme, the statement said that the Mumbai based exporter would procure the GPC from a connected firm based at Gandhinagar, inaccurately claiming it to be a resultant product made of the imported gold brought in duty free under the Advance Authorisation.

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Based on prior intelligence, the DRI seized the consignment on Sunday after they received inputs regarding export of huge amount of GPC to a Dubai based entity which is closely linked to the exporting

Covid-19: CM forms 'Task Force for Industry'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

With the threat of a third wave of Covid-19 looming large, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday directed the formation of a 'Task Force for Industry'.

The Task Force for Industry would be monitored directly by the Chief Minister's Office to ensure that the state's economic cycle and industrial production continues unhindered even during the pandemic situation.

"Maharashtra has set an example for the whole country when industries continued to operate without hindrance even during the Covid-19 pandemic last year," Thackeray said, addressing an online meeting of top corporates and industry honchos.

Some of the prominent personalities present at the meeting were representatives of the CII, Uday Kotak, Jane Karkada, Niranjan Hiranandani, Harsh Goenka, Salil Parekh, Neel Raheja, Anant Goenka, Baba Kalyani, B. Thiagarajan, Anant Singhania, Bannali Agrawala, Nikhil Meswani, Ashwin Yardi, Rashesh Shah, Keshav Muruges, Bharat Puri, Asim Charania, Sunil Mathur, Sanjeev Singh, Naushad Forbes, D.K. Sen, Sulajja Firodia-Motwani, Sharad Mahindra, among others.

Thackeray pointed out that the state was fully geared to combat the potential 'third wave' with



oxygen production and stocks, planning mass vaccination of industrial workers, continuing the economic cycle despite tightening of restrictions, arrangements for temporary field accommodation for employees in the company premises, and other measures. State Industry Minister Subhash Desai, Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte, Additional Health Secretary Pradeep Vyas and other top officials discussed various aspects of tackling the upcoming health scenario on the government side. Thackeray pointed out that currently around

1,300 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen is produced daily in the state which is expected to be scaled up by more than double if the coronavirus challenges increase. He urged all the corporates to get their employees and workers vaccinated on a mass scale, especially since private hospitals have been given stocks of around 25 per cent Covid-19 vaccine doses by the Centre.

The CM also called upon small and big enterprises to continue safe production by creating a 'bio-bubble system' within the Covid protocols and plan out shifts to avoid crowds without increasing stress on any facility.

Thackeray cautioned however that in view of the new Delta strain, more vigil must be maintained, and pointed out that many countries have started re-imposing public restrictions on a large scale.

Vyas said that in the first wave, the state had 20 lakh cases, while in the second wave, the figure had more than doubled to 40 lakh in barely 2 to 3 months, and said the speed of the next (third) wave is anticipated to be much higher with increasing number of infections in western and coastal Maharashtra.

The corporate heads assured the state government of their fullest cooperation to ensure that the virus doesn't affect industrial production or industrial precincts.

MUMBAI BUILDING WHERE ACTOR SUNIEL SHETTY LIVES SEALED



Mumbai: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has sealed several floors of a posh building in south Mumbai where Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty lives with his family due to rising Covid-19 cases reported from there, civic officials said here on Monday.

The 30-storied building with 120 flats is Prithvi Apartments, on Altamount Road, where many new Covid-19 cases have been detected in the past few days, where some of the affected floors have been sealed. As per BMC's Covid-19 protocols, if there are more than five active cases in any particular building, it is eligible for sealing to prevent further spread of the contagion. However, the fitness-buff Shetty and his family are currently out of town and are not affected by the BMC D Ward action. Nevertheless, he took to social media and commented: "Locked in or locked out Bolo Bolo tell tell. Along with Prithvi Apartments, the civic body has affixed the seal on at least 9 other posh buildings in the south Mumbai's affluent Malabar Hill and surroundings for growing number of Covid-19 cases. According to the BMC, in the second wave, a majority of the cases have been reported from residential buildings or skyscrapers as compared with the crowded slum areas.

MAHARASHTRA NEEDS 3 CRORE COVID VACCINE DOSES PER MONTH: TOPE

Mumbai: Health Minister Rajesh Tope said the state's capacity is to vaccinate 15 lakh people daily, but as of now only two to three lakh people are being inoculated in a day because of the "shortage of vaccine doses."

Maharashtra needs a minimum of three crore vaccine doses per month to inoculate the entire eligible population against coronavirus at the earliest, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Monday. Tope said the state's capacity is to vaccinate 15 lakh people daily, but as of now only two to three lakh people are being inoculated in a day because of the "shortage of vaccine doses". "Three days ago, we got seven lakh vaccine doses. The stock will be exhausted by the end of the day (July 12). We have got more than 3.60 crore vaccine doses so far and this includes about 25 lakh doses purchased directly by the state government," the minister said. Till Sunday, a total of 3,65,25,990 vaccine doses were administered in the state, as per official data. When asked about the paucity of vaccine doses in the state, Tope said, "We are working below our capacity. It is literally hand-to-mouth (situation)." He said if the vaccine doses are supplied properly, the target of vaccinating the entire eligible population can be achieved at the earliest. On Sunday, Maharashtra reported 8,535 new cases of coronavirus, taking the infection tally to 61,57,799, while 156 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,25,878, as per the state health department.

Maharashtra's daily Covid-19 cases fall to 7603; less than 500 fresh infections in Mumbai

With this latest rise, the state's cumulative Covid-19 infection tally has risen to 6,165,402, a health department bulletin showed.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra on Monday witnessed a fall in its fresh infections of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) as 7603 more people tested positive, taking its cumulative Covid-19 infection tally to 6,165,402, a health department bulletin showed. The coronavirus related death toll, meanwhile, rose to 126,024, as the daily death toll due to the viral disease fell to 53, according to the bulletin. 93 reconciled deaths were also added to the cumulative death toll.

Over the last few days, Maharashtra's daily caseload has been in the range of 8000-9000 infections per day. From July 8-11, the state saw 9114, 8992, 8266 and 8535 fresh infections respectively.

On Sunday, the Maharashtra government



said eight districts of the state have continued to report a high number of daily Covid-19 cases, as well as a high testing positivity rate. These are: Kolhapur, Satara,

Palghar, Raigad, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Pune (rural) and Sangli. In recent days, the Union ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW) has expressed concern at an

upsurge in new cases in Kerala and Maharashtra. On June 9, the ministry said the two states contributed to 53% of total coronavirus cases from the preceding week.

ED summons directors and office bearers of four branches of Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank

ED has issued these summons to further investigate the link of bad loan worth Rs 750 crore to Maharashtra's Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and his wife.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Enforcement Directorate has summoned the directors of cooperative banks of 04 districts under MSCB bank, including Pune and Satara cooperative banks.

ED is looking into this Rs 25,000 crore bank scam where the directors of the bank are accused of giving loans to NPAs, selling bank assets like sugar mills at throw away prices to their relatives and other influential people, giving loans to private entities by flouting the norms and siphoning off this money. MSCB has a long list of directors, including many influential politicians. Maharashtra's Deputy CM is

one of them. Recently ED found one such instance of a bad loan of Rs 750 cr. This loan was routed to a firm owned by Ajit Pawar and his wife. ED found out that a firm named Guru Commodities bought Jarandeshwar SSK firm in Rs 65.75 crore. As per ED the payment made to buy this firm came from Omkar builders, Shivalik builders, a firm owned by Ajit Pawar and 02 shell companies.

Then Guru commodities leased the firm over to Jarandeshwar pvt ltd, a firm owned by Ajit Pawar and his wife. The lease amount was initially Rs 12 lakh per annum. Later it was increased upto 6 crore per annum. Then, within a month, Guru commodities took a loan of Rs 89 crore from Pune cooperative bank. ED found out that the firm whose was being brought, leased and was moving hands was actually shut since last 05 years. And then again, a loan of Rs 750 crore was taken against Jarandeshwar SSK, the firm which was under lease of Ajit Pawar and his wife.

IMD issues orange alert; Mumbai, Thane and Palghar may receive heavy rainfall

The IMD has issued an orange alert in Mumbai, Thane, and Palghar districts predicting heavy rain till July 15.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Following a break, monsoon rainfall is back in action in Mumbai and adjoining districts. According to a bulletin issued by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday, heavy rainfall is predicted in Mumbai, Palghar, Thane and Raigad districts of Maharashtra till July 15. As a result, an orange alert has been issued in these places for four days.

Moreover, heavy to very heavy rainfall is predicted at isolated places for the four days from July 12 to July 15. IMD in its bulletin has further issued an orange alert, predicting extremely heavy rain in other districts of Maharashtra as well. Other isolated places like Ratnagiri Satara, Kolhapur, and Sindhudurg may also receive heavy



rainfall until July 15, stated the bulletin.

"Under the influence of the formation of a low-pressure area over west-central & adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts, an

east-west shear zone along 19 deg N and strengthening of westerlies, Maharashtra is very likely to experience an active rainfall spell during the week," stated the IMD bulletin. It may be noted that the total rainfall

recorded since June 1 by the Colaba observatory is 814.8 mm while the Santacruz observatory recorded it to be 1106.8 mm. In the past 24 hours, ending at 8.30 am today, Mumbai, Thane, and adjoining districts recorded moderate to near heavy rains, said KS Hosalkar, a senior official of IMD.

Following the IMD warning, fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea along and off Maharashtra and south Goa coasts till July 15. Notably, as far as the total water stock in the seven lakes that supply drinking water to Mumbai is concerned, the total capacity has been recorded at 2.61 lakh million litres or 18.08 per cent. However, in the previous year, the total stock for the corresponding period was around 2.89 lakh million litres or 19.98 per cent.



EDITOR'S SPECS

India, Russia together for peace

India and Russia said on Friday that it is important for the two countries to work together for Afghanistan's peace, and stability and security in the region. Following his two-day trip to Russia, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a joint press conference in Moscow said that the talks were as always very warm, comfortable, comprehensive and productive. The Russian Foreign Minister was in Delhi in April this year. As per a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, Jaishankar also had a "very good meeting" with Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov on Thursday. In the press conference, Jaishankar said, "The situation in Afghanistan occupied a lot of our attention because it has a direct implication for regional security. We believe that the immediate need of the day is really a reduction in violence. If we have to see peace within Afghanistan and around Afghanistan, it's important for India and Russia to work together and ensure that much of the progress that we've seen in economic, social and democratic terms are maintained. We are both committed to an independent, sovereign, united and democratic Afghanistan." The two sides also talked about the developments in Syria, Iran and Libya. Jaishankar said, A lot of the bilateral cooperation between India and Russia is focused on the nuclear, space, energy and defence sectors, but the two countries have now moved beyond the established areas with their discussion on greater inter regional cooperation particularly with the Russian far east. Jaishankar said the two sides made some progress with respect to the connectivity, especially the North South Corridor and the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor. India is poised to hold the Presidency of the UN Security Council in August. The minister shared with his counterpart Lavrov India's plans and ideas for the month. India is currently the chair of the BRICS and also of the RIC. The two countries have membership of G-20, ASEAN led fora, SCO and CICA.

Congress needs to give Priyanka a role outside UP

Saiyed Moziz Imam Zaidi

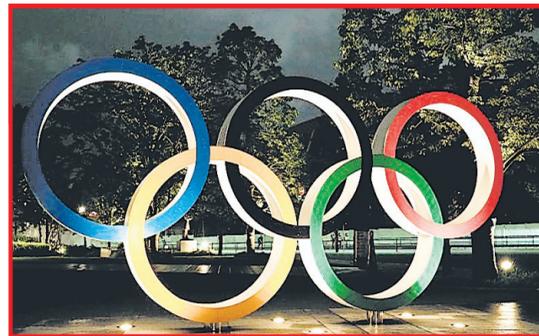
Not long after Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took complete charge of Uttar Pradesh as Congress general secretary and got into campaign mode, the country's attention span was consumed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet her active interventions in Hathras and Sonbhadra got her noticed. And at the peak of the migrant crisis, her offer of buses to transport the affected people to their homes, earned her kudos. During the farmers' agitation, too, she was at the forefront, but then the second wave hit the nation. With Uttar Pradesh going to vote for the next Assembly early next year along with Uttarakhand and Punjab, the Congress leadership is debating whether Priyanka should be assigned a more prominent, perhaps pan-India, role in the party. Several Congress leaders are vocal on this issue. One such person is Acharya Pramod

Krishnam, who has been on record saying that Priyanka be made party president. Others, who are not happy with the way Rahul Gandhi's office functions, suggest that Sonia Gandhi should continue as party president and Priyanka be made vice-president in-charge of north India. When the leadership crisis wracked the Congress, there was a collegium to assist Sonia Gandhi. In September last year, a committee was constituted with A.K. Antony, the late Ahmad Patel, Ambika Soni, K.C. Venugopal, Mukul Wasnik and Randeep Singh Surjewala as members. After the death of Ahmed Patel, however, the committee has been meeting occasionally. The Congress may enhance the role of this committee or appoint four vice-presidents, one for each region in the country, to decentralise power and focus on particular regions. The Congress constitution has no provision for a vice-president, but in the past Rahul Gandhi, Arjun Singh and Jitendra Prasad had held this position.

Some Congress leaders believe that Priyanka's style of functioning is smoother. She's an attentive listener and has been active in defusing crises in Rajasthan and Punjab. The Congress is mired in infighting in a number of states, even as Utrakhand, Punjab, UP, Goa, Manipur and Gujarat are preparing to go to vote, so a bigger role for her in the party could bring more traction. A section of the Congress leadership points out that Rahul Gandhi can lead the party without holding any post. These leaders say he has been targeting the government on various issues. Even his critics accept his credentials for mounting attacks on the Prime Minister consistently on the pandemic and economic crisis. The party is facing crises in Rajasthan, Punjab, Utrakhand, Karnataka, and now the supporters of T.S. Singhdeo in Chhattisgarh are demanding that he be made the chief minister. Singhdeo insists he has not said anything against the party, and that Sonia and Rahul will take a call on the matter.



His supporters, though, insist that the party must fulfil its assurance to the leader who was instrumental in winning seats in the tribal belt of the state, which was with the BJP at that time. Similarly, Sachin Pilot is pushing for change in Rajasthan and the party cannot afford to lose him after Jyotiraditya Scindia walked out and was rewarded with a berth in the Union Cabinet.



Qaiser Mohammad Ali

When the Indian athletes, seeking to improve upon the six-medal haul bagged at the 2012 London Olympic Games, managed only two at the 2016 Rio Olympics, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog came up with a plan for India to win 50 medals at the 2024 Olympics. If that happens three years from now, all those involved in the making and implementing that scheme, besides the athletes who would win those 50 medals in Paris, would deserve the highest accolade of the country. They would thoroughly deserve all the prizes for what would

probably be the biggest jump in terms of sudden improvement in the history of the world's biggest sports extravaganza, Olympics, rather in the history of mankind. Whether or not that happens is another question altogether. Let us first check the ground reality. India has won a grand total of 28 medals, nine of them being gold, in the 121 years of Olympic participation. On the other hand, American swimming juggernaut Michael Phelps has won 28 medals, 23 of them gold, in just four Olympics (2004-2016). These figures tell a thousand tales of America's and India's sporting system/history. All arguments end there. Period. And just by the way,

India must start competing, and not participating, in Olympics -- honestly

India is currently the second most densely populated country in the world with almost 1.30 billion people, while the US is a distant third with a little over 300 million inhabitants. The difference is humongous, stark, and telling. If the US and Phelps in those 12 years has dominated the global sports scene it is because of one major factor, honesty, which is missing in India. They recognised the talent in Phelps and persisted with him, honestly, and without taking his transgressions off the field. The result is before us. Honesty is an infinite, all-encompassing term, considering its importance in everything we do in all walks of life. India immediately needs to turn honest in selection of athletes and teams, in providing quality infrastructure and diet to athletes, in providing unstinted official and unofficial support to athletes, in offering monetary incentives to them, and in giving them due recognition without vindictiveness and bias, and in several other areas.

Instead, we in India indulge in gimmickry. Our sports administrators must realise that medals, particularly at the Olympic Games, are not won by making 'best of luck' messages trend on Twitter or by producing catchy anthems before every Olympics or by organising webinars, or making unrealistic/bombastic predictions on medal count. Nor will avoiding straight answers and hiding behind 'hope-to-win' and 'it-all-depends-on-the-draw' do any good to Indian sports. Nor gimmicky/events like "100 days to go" or "50 days countdown begins" for the Olympics would either be of any help to athletes. At best, these things can take the general, gullible public away from the reality. Truth is that very often athletes are pulled out of their training schedule and forced to attend such functions, so that sports administrators could bask in borrowed glory, while athletes' rhythm is broken. Also, no sporting excellence can be achieved

by changing names and logos of sports bodies either. The sooner the Indian sports system, from administrators to athletes, accept these facts the better it would be for our beloved India. Unfortunately, everything listed above has either happened or is continuing to happen. On Saturday, for example, the Board of Control for Cricket in India tweeted a 40-second video in which the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Mithali Raj, and Harmanpreet Singh are heard saying "cheer for India" and "dekhie hamare athletes ko Tokyo Olympics mein (watch our athletes at the Tokyo Olympics)". No harm at all in producing such feel-good audio-video messages from our best cricketers just before an important sports event. Still, one may, at the same time, ask this: how much will these one-liners help Indian athletes beat the opposition and win medals at the Olympics? Everyone knows the answer.

international

PAKISTAN, AFTER ROOTING FOR TALIBAN, FACES A BLOWBACK

Now that the Taliban are taking over vast tracts of the country and seem to be on the cusp of seizing power, panic is spreading through Pakistan's halls of power, the Wall Street Journal said.



Kabul | Agencies

Islamabad wants a negotiated agreement in Afghanistan as it fears that an outright Taliban takeover would galvanise Pakistani jihadists, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported. For two decades, a large part of the Pakistani security establishment rooted for the Taliban in the Afghan war. Now that the Taliban are taking over vast tracts of the country and

seem to be on the cusp of seizing power, panic is spreading through Pakistan's halls of power, the WSJ said. Ever since the 2001 US invasion ousted the Pakistani-backed Taliban regime in Kabul, Pakistan's powerful military has unofficially provided carefully calibrated support to the

group, allowing Afghan insurgents to operate from its territory. Pakistan wanted to bolster the Taliban as a counter to the influence of its enemy India in Afghanistan and to have a potent proxy there after a US departure, the report said. Formally an American ally since

2001, Pakistan's government denies backing the Taliban, but says it has some limited influence over the group. With the Taliban sweeping through a third of Afghanistan's districts following the US military withdrawal and surrounding the country's major cities, Pakistani authorities have to grapple with the unintended consequences of their policies. The report said a total takeover by the Taliban or a new civil war in Afghanistan would backfire against Islamabad's national interests, senior Pakistani officials say. "We are so closely intertwined with Afghanistan, ethnically, religiously, tribally, that whenever there is civil war, Pakistan gets sucked in automatically," said Pakistan's former Defence Minister, Lt Gen Naeem Lodhi (retd). "Civil war (in Afghanistan) is the last thing that Pakistan would like to happen," the WSJ said.

Nepal SC reinstates House, orders Prez to appoint Deuba as PM

Kathmandu | Agencies

In a dramatic move, the Nepal Supreme Court on Monday overturned Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's decision to dissolve the House and issued an interim order to reinstate it, while also ordering President Bidya Devi Bhandari to appoint opposition Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba as the new premier. A five-member constitutional bench led by Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana issued the ruling stating that President Bhandari's decision to dissolve the House of Representatives upon a recommendation of Oli was "an unconstitutional act." The court also ordered the President to appoint Deuba, who had presented his majority during the election process on May 24, as the new Prime Minister by Tuesday evening. The bench further ordered the summoning of a fresh session of the House on July 18. Prime Minister Oli had dissolved the house on May 21 and declared snap elections on November 12 and 19. This is the second time that the apex court has decided in favour of reinstating the House during Oli's tenure.



Earlier on December 20, 2020, Oli dissolved the House and the Supreme Court reinstated it on February 25, 2021. Major political parties besides Oli's Communist Party of Nepal-UML, have welcomed Monday's decision. After failing to secure a trust vote on May 10, Prime Minister Oli was re-appointed as per Article 76 (3) of the Constitution in his capacity as the parliamentary party leader of the largest party in the House. Oli, however, opted not to seek a vote of confidence from the house as per Article 76(4) and recommended to President Bhandari to initiate a new government process as per the Article 75 (5). President Bhandari, on May 20, asked the members of the House to stake their claim to the new government by 5 p.m. the other day.

Pentagon monitoring Taliban's sweeping advances in Afghanistan 'with deep concern'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pentagon officials are monitoring the Taliban's sweeping advances in Afghanistan "with deep concern" and are encouraging its partners in Kabul to "step up" and defend their country amid the pull-out of American forces, spokesman John Kirby said. With the Taliban claiming to have taken control of 85 per cent of Afghanistan, which the US government officials dispute, Kirby told Fox News on Sunday that the Pentagon was "not unmindful" of the situation. "We're certainly watching with deep concern, the deteriorating security situation and the violence which is of course way too high, and the advances and the momentum that the Taliban seems to have right now," he said. As per the report, Kirby said that the Pentagon officials were working with the Afghan military "to encourage them to use the capacity and the capability that we know they have, and we know that they know how to defend their country." He stated that Afghanistan's capacity and capabilities included a "very capable" Air Force and "very sophisticated" Special Forces that can help defend the country from the Taliban resurgence.



"This is a time for them to step up and do exactly that," Kirby said of their Afghan partners. With the US Central Command estimating that more than 90 per cent of the withdrawal process is complete, Kirby said that even though the American troops won't be supporting Afghanistan on the ground, Washington will continue to support the country and its people. "We are not walking away from this relationship," Kirby said. "We're going to continue to support them from a financial perspective, logistical perspective and certainly aircraft maintenance." The US pullout from Afghanistan comes after 20 years of Washington's longest-running war. More than 2,400 US troops have died and nearly 21,000 others wounded.

5 NEO-JMB MILITANTS ARRESTED IN B'DESH, IED-MAKING MATERIALS SEIZED

Dhaka: Five members of the Neo-JMB banned militant outfit were arrested in Bangladesh by a specialised unit of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), a top official said on Monday, adding that IED-making materials were also seized during multiple raids. Md Asaduzzaman, chief of the DMP's Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit, told IANS that while three of the militants were arrested on July 8, the remaining two were held on Sunday. The militants who were arrested on Sunday evening were identified as IED maker Abdullah Al Mamun alias 'David Killer', and Major Osama alias Naeem, a militant trainer. According to the CTTC chief, Naeem was also a bomb-making instructor and used to lead the prayers at a mosque. The raids were carried out on Sunday night at a militant hideout in Arahazar, Narayanganj district, where officials also defused three IED bombs, Asaduzzaman said, adding a huge quantity of explosives were seized from the den. The second raid on a house at Kazipara also in Narayanganj ended at around 4 am on Monday. Many books on jihadi literature, IED-making equipment and remotes were recovered during the operation, Asaduzzaman told IANS. Last May, the Neo-JMB militants left a remote-controlled IED next to the traffic police box at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj. The bomb disposal team of the CTTC defused it. CTTC officials have said that the IED was made by Mamun.

South African police arrest 62 after violent protests

Johannesburg | Agencies

The South African police said that they have arrested 62 people on Sunday in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Province as people protested against the incarceration of former President Jacob Zuma. Zuma started serving his 15 months jail for contempt of court from last Wednesday. People in his hometown KwaZulu-Natal started looting shops, burning trucks and blocking roads calling for his release, the Xinhua news agency reported. The protests spread to Gauteng, where the economic centre Johannesburg and administrative capital city Pretoria located, on Saturday and Sunday. In Johannesburg many people chanting slogans in support of Zuma marched in Johannesburg city centre calling for Zuma's release. Shops closed and there was little movement in town. "62 people have been



arrested as the police continue to respond to opportunistic criminality emanating from violent protests over the weekend in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng province," said Spokesperson for the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NatJOINTS) Col Brenda Muridili. "The police are working closely with their respective local Metro police departments, have heightened visibility and remain on high alert in response to incidents of opportunistic criminality and violent protests in the two provinces over the weekend," she added. She stated that they

arrested people who were looting businesses and barricading roads in Johannesburg's Jeppe and Alexandra townships. Muridili said that in another instance about 800 people attacked police, resulting in the shooting of police officers who have now received medical attention in hospital. "A warning is issued to those circulating inflammatory messages, inciting violence and lawlessness, that they refrain from doing so. The possibility of criminal charges being instituted against such persons cannot be ruled out, particularly in the event of injury or death that may come as a result of any operational response by the security forces to these incidents of violence and opportunistic criminality," she said. Muridili said that they are investigating the death of a 40-year-old man who was shot in Johannesburg's Bramley.



ENGLAND CELEBRITY FANS REACT TO EUROS FINAL LOSS

London | Agencies

England's big-name fans have given their verdict on the team after they lost the Euro 2020 final on penalties in heart-breaking fashion. A host of celebrities have shared their support for a team who united a nation and made fans feel such euphoric emotions throughout the tournament. TV star Amanda Holden, 50, attended the final yesterday at Wembley and later shared a snap of her sitting on a moped wearing a the Three Lions football shirt.

The Britain's Got Talent star wrote: "It didn't come home but oh my god do I feel proud of @england and #GarethSouthgate for last

nights match.

"It takes balls to volunteer for penalties. A night never to forget, we came together as a nation and we still have the #worldcup next year..." The support has been echoed throughout the country, with TV presenter Piers Morgan. Piers praised the young men for having "guts" to take a penalty in a game of great importance.

Popstar Adele rallied behind the England team after their heart-breaking defeat. She wrote, "You did us so proud! You brought our game home and brought us all together." Wembley rose to give a standing ovation to the England stars who had delivered a stunning run to the final.



MAISIE SMITH LOOKS WORSE FOR WEAR ON 20TH BIRTHDAY

London | Agencies

EastEnders star Maisie Smith looked worse for wear as she was turned away from a bar at 2am following a boozy night celebrating her 20th birthday. The actress, who plays Tiffany Butcher in EastEnders, was pictured partying in East London on Saturday night with pals.

Maisie put on a glamorous display for the occasion, slipping

ping into a

bright pink and orange slip dress which featured a plunging neckline and a thigh-split.

She accessorised with a pair of matching pink stiletto heels and fluffy angel wings.

The TV star added a slick of glamorous makeup and style her strawberry locks into a sleek down do to complete the look. But despite getting all dolled up, Maisie was reportedly forced to cut the celebrations short.

Onlookers say some members of her group were turned away from a bar at 2am for being "too drunk," leaving Maisie less than impressed and forcing them to call it a night.

But the actress still managed to turn the streets of London into her very own catwalk before heading home as she showcased her curves in her stunning ensemble.

BRITNEY SPEARS 'SEEKING NEW LAWYER' TO FIRE DAD JAMIE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Britney Spears is "seeking a new lawyer" to fire dad Jamie after he was accused of using her money in her conservatorship battle. The star's court-appointed lawyer, Samuel Ingham III, resigned from the case after she complained the conservatorship was abusive. He filed documents in Los Angeles superior court requesting to be dismissed from his role as soon as a new lawyer was found. According to TMZ, Britney has now been in contact with a large law firm and is hoping to hire the services of former federal prosecutor Mathew Rosengart.

Rosengart has represented a string of Hollywood stars including Ben Affleck, Steven Spielberg, Sean Penn, Eddie Vedder, Soledad O'Brien, Michael Mann, and NBA star Jimmy Butler. Meanwhile, Britney's long-time manager also resigned on Tuesday. Britney's life and career have been overseen by her dad and others since 2008 under the complex legal arrangement of conservatorship. Last month, she called for the arrangement to be terminated —claiming that she was forced to work and comparing it to sex trafficking.

Paris Hilton shows 'how to work like a boss babe'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Socialite and entrepreneur Paris Hilton has showcased how to work like a "boss babe" in a video she shared on social media. Paris posted a clip on Instagram on Monday morning according to India time. In the clip, Paris is seen dressed in a signature pink outfit, sitting in her pink car. In the video, she is seen giving advice on how to work.

She suggested: "Wear diamond rings to divert the glare of direct sunlight, add sparkle when you're in the driver seat by wearing sliv gloves, take work calls on the speaker or leave early to have time to pull over. Arrive and get 10."

"How To Work Like A Boss Babe (In The Pink Bentley) #LovesIt" Paris wrote as caption.

QUITTING SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BEEN 'DIVINE': SINGER LORDE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Lorde says quitting social media has been a "divine" experience. "It has been divine, I really enjoy it. I'm a shy and sensitive person. It has a lot of information, I realise how I was just pummelling myself with headlines and thoughts from other people all day and it did not give me much room to have ideas or brainstorm things. I am very grateful for that now," she said on Australian radio show "Ash London Live". Lorde, whose real name is Ella Yelich-O'Connor, however notes quitting social media has a drawback, too. It becomes tough staying in touch with what friends are up to, she said according to reports femalefirst.co.uk. "The only thing I do think is that I underestimated how much of my friends' loves I kept up with on Instagram. People don't really tell you what they're up to, they just tell everyone via a story. That's how people stay connected. I really have to make friend dates. I've been calendaring people's birthdays now," she said.

Sarah-Jane Crawford pregnant with her second child

Sarah-Jane Crawford has revealed she is pregnant with her second child. The TV and radio presenter, 39, and her football manager partner Brian Barry-Murphy, 42, already have a daughter, Summer, who was born in August 2020. She told Hello! Magazine, "It's one of those things that's a little bit surreal. I never thought I'd have one baby, let alone two."

Crawford, who suffered a miscarriage before she got pregnant with Summer and was advised she may need IVF to have children, said she was up for the challenge of having two youngsters so close together in age.

She added, "People say, 'Oh, brilliant, our kids grew up together, they're best

friends'. I think there's a lot of practical

reasons and emotional reasons, in terms of siblings, why it's good. The TV star, who is a vegan, said she has been craving meat during her pregnancy but is determined not to give in.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Sasha Banks



EURO 2020:

DONNARUMMA THE HERO AS ITALY CLINCH TITLE

London | Agencies

Goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma was the hero with two saves in the penalty shootout as Italy won the Euro 2020 title 3-2 on penalties after the final against England ended 1-1 after extra time.

Marcus Rashford sent his penalty into the post and then the Italian goalkeeper saved shots from Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Sako after England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford had done well to thwart Jorginho and Andrea Belotti on Sunday evening, reports Xinhua.

Once again the penalties were cruel on England, but Italy will argue that after suffering in the first half, they did enough in the remainder of the game to deserve the win.

While Italy were unchanged from the squad that beat Spain in the semifinal, England coach Gareth Southgate returned to the three central defenders who had served so well against Germany.

Southgate's tactics paid immediate dividends when Luke Shaw volleyed England into a second-minute lead. Harry Kane dropped deep and created space for Kieran Trippier and the wing-back had time to pick out Shaw's run at the far post.

Italy came out strongly at the half, looking to dominate where they had struggled before the break. Insigne fired a free kick just high and wide after a needless foul from Raheem Sterling and although Harry Maguire headed a free kick over, it was game on for Italy. Federico Chiesa's run ended with Pickford blocking from a narrow angle and the England goalkeeper did even better to block Chiesa's shot in the 62nd minute. Italy were playing in and around the England penalty area and although Maguire flicked Chiesa's cross out for a corner, Leonardo Bonucci was able to scramble home from close range after Pickford had blocked Marco Verratti's original header.



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SOUTHGATE TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENGLAND'S LOSS



London: England manager Gareth Southgate took the full blame for England's agonising loss in the Euro final against Italy, leaving the whole of England heartbroken. Having taken a second-minute lead courtesy of Luke Shaw, England were forced into extra time followed by a nervy penalty shootout as Leonardo Bonucci levelled on Sunday. Harry Kane and Harry Maguire scored England's first two penalties. But Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho failed to convert. Bukayo Saka's decisive spot-kick was saved by Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, giving Italy the title at Wembley Stadium. "They've been tight throughout and that's how it is today. In the end we weren't quite able to see the game through in the normal, regulation time. Italy showed what an absolutely outstanding side they are. But our players have done themselves proud. Every one of them has been exceptional. We're obviously unbelievably disappointed not to go that one step further," said Southgate to media after the match.

He took complete responsibility in giving the penalty kicks to Rashford, Sancho and Saka, all of which failed. "That is my responsibility. I chose the guys to take the kicks. I told the players that nobody is on their own in that situation. We win and lose together as a team. They have been tight throughout and that's how it needs to stay."

Fans break into scuffle



London: London Metropolitan riot police came down to London's West End after thousands of football fans roamed on the streets post England's loss against Italy in the Euro 2020 final.

Scores of officers wearing riot gear and clutching shields were making their way through the streets of central London when large crowds attempted to push into the fan zone at Trafalgar Square without tickets. The fans dispersed quickly, though, as rain arrived in the city. The riot police were also seen at Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square in London after football supporters were climbing over street lamps, over the roofs of buses and setting off fire in front of hundreds of fans following England's defeat. The chaotic scenes came after England lost the Euro 2020 final on penalties 2-3 to Italy, extending the wait for a major trophy after the 1966 World Cup.

Conway, Sophie named ICC Players of the Month



Dubai | Agencies

New Zealand opener Devon Conway and England left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone have been named ICC Players of the Month for June.

"Conway won the award ahead of team-mate Kyle Jamieson, who was the Player of the Match in the WTC (World Test Championship) final against India, with South Africa's Quinton de Kock the other nominee for his fine performances on their tour of the West Indies," said a statement from the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The left-handed batsman is the first New Zealand player to win the ICC Men's Player of the Month award after an impressive first month in Test cricket, cracking a solid double century on debut against England at Lord's and following it up with two half-centuries in his next two games, including in the ICC WTC Final in Southampton.

"I am truly honoured to win this award. That I have received it for my performances in Test cricket makes it extra special," said Conway.

The England left-arm spinner Sophie pipped the Indian pair of Shafali Verma and Sneha Rana to become the second English woman player to win the ICC Women's Player of the Month award after Tammy Beaumont, who won it in February.

Sophie, a winner of the annual ICC Emerging Player of the Year award in 2018, was the most successful bowler in the one-off Test against India in Bristol, in which she grabbed an eight-wicket haul. She also grabbed three wickets each in the two ODIs which followed.

"It is really nice to win this award. It is after a period in which we've played all three formats so it feels good to be recognised for my performances in the Test and the white-ball series," said Sophie.

'Para shooters capable of winning four medals'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian shooting team bound for the Paralympic Games is capable of winning at least four medals, according to the chief national coach JP Nautiyal, who is overseeing the final preparations at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting ranges here.

"It's a balanced team with young and senior players and many of them are coming up with excellent scores in training. It has been a great journey for the entire team. Many of them also have good temperament to pull off good results in the finals," Nautiyal said on Monday. "Everyone is working very hard and staying focused. And I am confident that they will produce good results. I am expecting at least four medals including gold," said the Shooting Technical Committee (STC) president of the Paralympic Committee of India.

A record 10 para shooters, including top pistol shooters Singhraj and Manish Narwal, have been named for the Games. This is the first time that 10 para shooters



have achieved the required benchmark for qualification. At Rio 2016 Paralympics, only one shooter, Naresh Sharma, had attained the qualifying berth in rifle events.

Shooting contingent: (BOX) Men: Manish Narwal (P1, P4), Singhraj (P1, P4), Deependar Singh (P1), Deepak (R1, R6, R7), Sidhartha Babu (R3, R6), Swaroop Mahavir Unhalkar (R1), Akash (P3, P4), Rahul Jakhar (P3). Women: Avani Lekhara (R2, R3, R6, R8), Rubina Francis (P2).

BIG 3 OF TENNIS DOMINATE LIKE NO OTHER

London:

World No. 1 Novak Djokovic's eighth win at Wimbledon is the 17th Grand Slam title out of last 18 won by the top three of tennis.

Since the start of the year 2017, Roger Federer has won three, Djokovic eight and Rafael Nadal six major titles. Austria's Dominic Thiem is the only one who managed to sneak in among the top three, winning the US Open title in 2020. Djokovic has now joined Federer and Nadal as the men's players with most Grand Slam singles titles. They all have 20 titles each.

Since the start of 2004, the three have won 84 per cent of the Grand Slam titles i.e. out of the last 70 major tournaments, the trio has won as many as 59.

The other 11 titles have been shared between Stan Wawrinka (3 titles), Andy Murray (3), Gaston Gaudio, Marat Safin, Juan Martin del Potro, Marin Cilic and Thiem.



Djokovic undecided about Olympic participation

London | Agencies

Serbia's world No. 1 Novak Djokovic said he is still undecided about his participation at the Tokyo Olympic Games, adding that it was a "50-50" thing as there are going to be "a lot of restrictions within the (Games) Village". Djokovic, who bagged the singles bronze at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, defeated Italy's Matteo Berrettini in the final on Sunday to clinch his sixth Wimbledon title and 20th Grand Slam crown overall. By winning the title, the Serb joined Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, the other two members of the Big Three, as the players with the most number of Grand Slam singles titles in the Open Era.

"My plan was always to go to Olympic Games, but right now I'm a little bit divided. I also hear that there's going to be a lot of



restrictions within the Village. Possibly you would not be able to see other athletes perform live. I can't even have my stringer that is very important part of my team. I can't have a stringer. I'm limited with the amount of people I can take in my team as well," said Djokovic during the post-match press conference.

"It's kind of 50-50 because of what I heard in the last couple days (about the ban on spectators)," added Djokovic, about the possibility of competing in a fourth consecutive Games. Djokovic has won the season's first three majors, and he is now a US Open trophy away from becoming the second man in the Open Era to claim the calendar-year Grand Slam after Rod Laver in 1969.

The 34-year-old has won eight of the past 12 Grand Slams he has played, and will be the favourite at Flushing Meadows.

Euro 2020: Archer, Stokes, FA hit out at racist trolls, police probes



London | Agencies

Cricketers Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes have appealed to fans to not racially abuse Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka, who all missed penalties during England's Euro 2020 final against Italy even as the country's Football Association (FA) expressed "disgust" at racist trolls taking potshots at the trio. England lost the final to Italy 2-3 in penalties after the regulation time score had ended 1-1. While Harry Kane and Harry Maguire converted the first two penalties for England, Rashford, Sancho and Saka -- who are all players of colour -- missed the remaining three penalties.

"Do not racially abuse those players tonight!" tweeted pace bowler Archer a few hours after the final as trolls on social media began abusing the players.

Archer himself is a Barbadian representing England. Team-mate Ben Stokes, who leads England in the ongoing ODI series against Pakistan, quote-tweeted Archer and wrote, "Retweet" urging fans to retweet it. England FA also backed its players and tweeted, "We are disgusted that some of our squad -- who have given everything for the shirt this summer -- have been subjected to discriminatory abuse online after tonight's game. We stand with our players," it added. "We could not be clearer that anyone behind such disgusting behaviour is not welcome in following the team," the statement added.

London's police service, the Metropolitan Police has said it is investigating the "offensive and racist social media comments. This abuse is totally unacceptable, it will not be tolerated and it will be investigated."

Copa America: Messi dedicates win to Argentinians and Diego

Rio de Janeiro | Agencies

Lionel Messi said that he hoped Argentina's Copa America triumph would help provide strength to his compatriots in their battle to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic.

The message, posted on social media, came less than a day after the Albiceleste beat Brazil 1-0 in the Copa America final at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium, ending Argentina's 28-year wait for a major trophy on Sunday. "It was an incredible Copa America. We know that we can still improve a lot of things, but the truth is that the guys gave it everything and I



can't be more proud to have the luck of being captain of this spectacular group," Messi said in the post, reports Xinhua. "I want to dedicate this success to my family, who always gave me the strength to move forward, to my friends that I

love so much, to all the people who believe in us and most of all to the 45 million Argentinians who have endured such a tough time with this virus ... , especially those that have been personally affected."

Messi, who was awarded the player of the tournament for his four goals and five assists, also dedicated the victory to the memory of Argentine football legend Diego Maradona, who died last year aged 60. "This is for all [Argentines], and of course also for Diego, who surely was supporting us from wherever he is," said the 34-year-old, before urging Argentines to continue following health protocols to limit the spread of the virus.

HYDERABAD FC SIGN SPANISH MIDFIELDER EDUARDO GARCIA

Hyderabad: Indian Super League (ISL) side Hyderabad FC on Monday signed Spanish attacking midfielder Eduardo 'Edu' Garcia on a one-year contract. The experienced 31-year-old joins Manolo Marquez's side from last season's runners-up ATK Mohun Bagan. Born in Zaragoza, Spain, Garcia spent three seasons with the Real Zaragoza's B side before going on to represent the senior side in the 2016/17 season of the Spanish Segunda Division. He moved to India for the first time with Bengaluru FC in 2017, making 14 appearances in the ISL before joining Chinese side Zhejiang Greentown who paid a transfer fee to secure his signature.

He returned to India with ATK FC in January 2018 and helped the Kolkata-based side to the ISL title in 2019/20 scoring in the final against Chennaiyin FC. Garcia spent the 2020/21 ISL season with Antonio Lopez's ATK Mohun Bagan and helped his side as they narrowly finished second in the league, and made it to ISL final.

Olympic countdown

Manpreet, the backbone of the Indian team

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Manpreet Singh has had a successful stint as Indian skipper in the last few years, helping the team win the Asia Cup 2017, Asian Champions Trophy in 2018, FIH Series Final in 2019, and reaching the quarterfinals of the 2018 World Cup in Bhubaneswar.

The Jalandhar-born 29-year-old halfback was also part of the team that won the Asian Games gold medal in

2014 at Incheon and bronze at the Jakarta Asian Games four years later; two silver medals in the Champions Trophy and a silver medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. The big wins missing from his collection are the FIH Hockey World Cup and the Olympics.

Though the World Cup is a little later, in January 2023, Manpreet would be hoping to at least chase the Olympic medal in Japan. Captain of the men's team

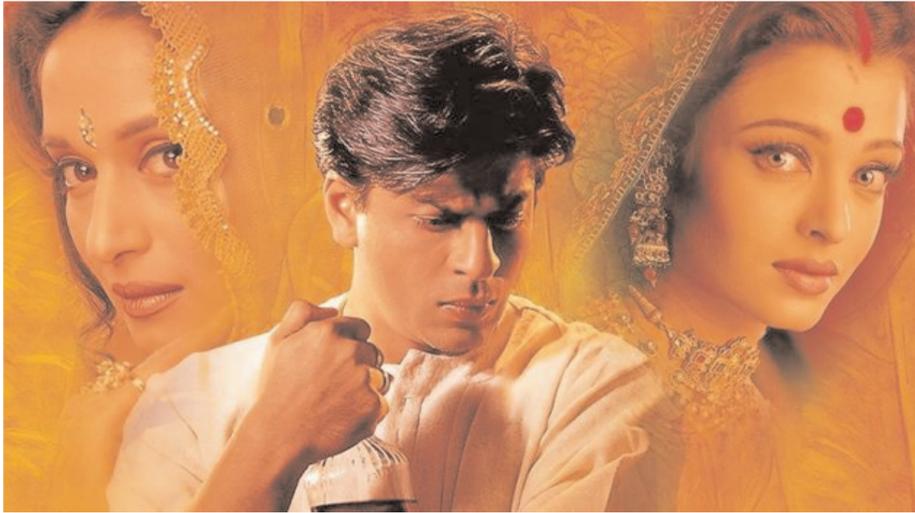


for the Tokyo Olympics, Manpreet will be participating in his third Olympics and hoping that it brings luck to his team. Born on June 26, 1992, in a family of farmers in Mithapur near Jalandhar, Manpreet, who lists former Indian captain and defender Pargat Singh as his idol, says he is lucky to be playing hockey. His family was against him taking up hockey and one day his mother locked Manpreet, then 10, in a room to prevent him from playing the game. Persuaded

by his childhood coach, Manpreet not only got to play hockey, but his family became his biggest supporter and fan. So much so that when Manpreet lost his father in 2016, he rushed back from the Azlan Shah Cup in Malaysia but was persuaded by his mother to return to action as soon as possible. The hallmark of Manpreet's game is his cool demeanor under pressure. He will need to show that quality in ample measure at the Olympics.

MADHURI GOES DOWN THE MEMORY LANE AS

DEVIDAS MARKS 19 YEARS IN BOLLYWOOD



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The beautiful actress Madhuri Dixit Nene got nostalgic on the completion of 19 years of her movie 'Devdas' that also starred Shahrukh Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. She took to social media and poured out her emotions

saying that even after 19 years those moments are so refreshing and paid tribute to legendary actor Dilip Kumar who recently passed away.

She said, "Reminiscing some great and happy memories from the sets of 'Devdas'. Even 19 years later it all feels so fresh! Thank

you Sanjay for sharing these. Will Cherish these forever! Here's our ode to #Dilipkumar, just like #Devdas, you will continue to live on...forever! #19yearsofDevdas."

Shah Rukh Khan retweeted on this, saying, "All the late nights, early mornings, problem worked out bcoz of

the gorgeous (he tagged Madhuri Dixit), the stunning Aishwarya, ever cheerful (tagged 'bindasbhidu' that is Jackie Shroff), full of life (he tagged Kirron Kher) and the whole team slogging under the masterful Sanjay Bhansali. Only issue - the dhoti kept falling off! Thx for the love."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ankita Lokhande is back to the sets of the show, which had made her and Sushant Singh Rajput a household name 12 years ago. Yes, the popular daily soap "Pavitra Rishta" is returning to the screen!

Ankita reprises her role as Archana while actor Shaheer Sheikh is set to essay Manav, the character originally played by late Sushant, and later Hiten Tejwani.

Taking to Instagram on Sunday evening, Ankita shared a boomerang video playing with the show's clapboard. "Pavitra rishta," Ankita wrote along with a red heart emoji. The actress also reposted a post originally shared by the official page of Alt Balaji featuring a photograph of herself and Shaheer posing together with the show's clapboard. It reads, "Sometimes in most ordinary lives, we find the most extraordinary love stories! Witness the extraordinary love story of Manav and Archana. #PavitraRishta Filming begins; streaming soon on #ALTBalaji #ItsNeverTooLate."

Ankita Lokhande begins shooting for 'Pavitra Rishta'



Milind Soman, Ankita Knowar share posts to mark 3rd anniversary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Model-actor-fitness enthusiast Milind Soman and his wife Ankita Konwar celebrated their third wedding anniversary on Monday. Taking to Instagram, Milind shared pictures with his wife. He wrote: "Happy 3rd anniversary @ankita_earthly, miss you every moment you crazy thing #love."

Ankita penned a note on Instagram: "Everyday is an adventure, a new anniversary of something and another valentine's day with you. 3 years since we had our magical wedding in that little forest in Spain, barefoot, in front of a waterfall. Being with you is like experiencing magic, firsthand! You're the water to my earth. Shaping me,

nurturing me, growing with me. I'm grateful for this bond we share, every single living minute. Always and forever #ultra

#foreverlove #forbetterorforworse #insicknessandinhealth."

Milind and Ankita had tied the knot in Spain in July, 2018.

HIMESH RESHAMMIYA TO LAUNCH INDIAN IDOL FAME MOHD DANISH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer-Composer Himesh Reshammiya is all set to launch the Indian idol contestant, Mohd Danish. Danish will be heard in the second song from the album 'Himesh Ke Dil Se'. Himesh's Surroor 2021 title track recently crossed 60 million views and 20 million audio streams in few days followed by Tere Bagair sung by Pawandeep and Arunita.

Himesh will now be launching Indian idol contestant Mohd Danish with a beautiful soul stirring song on heartbreak that has been composed by Himesh itself with lyrics by Sameer Anjana.

Talking about the song Himesh Reshammiya says "Mohd Danish has sung exceptionally well and people will be very happy to see a new singer perform like a veteran in this song. I'm extremely satisfied with his singing just the way Pawandeep and Arunita or Saiwai Bhat sang my compositions and delivered beauti-

Mrunal Thakur says 'Toofaan' role made her strong, confident

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Mrunal Thakur is overjoyed to work with the National Award-winning filmmaker Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra in the upcoming boxing drama "Toofaan", starring Farhan Akhtar. She says playing Ananya in the film has made her strong and confident. Having a conversation about working with Mehra, whose "Rang De Basanti" earned him a National Film Award as well as a BAFTA nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, and who also made "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag" among other films, Mrunal is overwhelmed. "I think this is one of the most Toofani moments I am having. It's my fourth film and I got a chance to work with Rakeysh sir," said Mrunal. "I think all the other actresses are going to be jealous and I feel lucky," the actress quipped, adding the film was an "overwhelming process". She added: "I have learned a lot. Ananya (her character) has made Mrunal so strong and confident, and as a human also I feel I am that catalyst when it comes to my family." "Toofaan" is the story of a boxer played by Farhan Akhtar, who pushes his limits and works hard to win. The film is slated to release on Amazon Prime Video on July 16.



AKHIL AKKINENI STARTS SHOOTING FOR 'AGENT'

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Telugu actor Akhil Akkineni kickstarted the shoot of his upcoming spy-thriller film "Agent" here on Monday. The actor, who has built a ripped body for this role, also posted the poster of the film on his Instagram. He captioned the poster as: "365 days back, I was challenged by

#SunderReddy to transform myself mentally and physically. Sir, the fire you have ignited in me will burn furiously throughout this film. I promise you that."

"Agent" is Akhil's first collaboration with director Surender Reddy. Newcomer Sakshi Vaidya has been roped in to play the leading lady in the film. The film is written by Yakkantham Vamsi and produced by Ramabrahmam Sunkara under AK Entertainments and Surender 2 Cinema.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Shilpa Shetty

fully and I am humbled to know that all their songs have done very well."

Himesh will soon announce the release date.